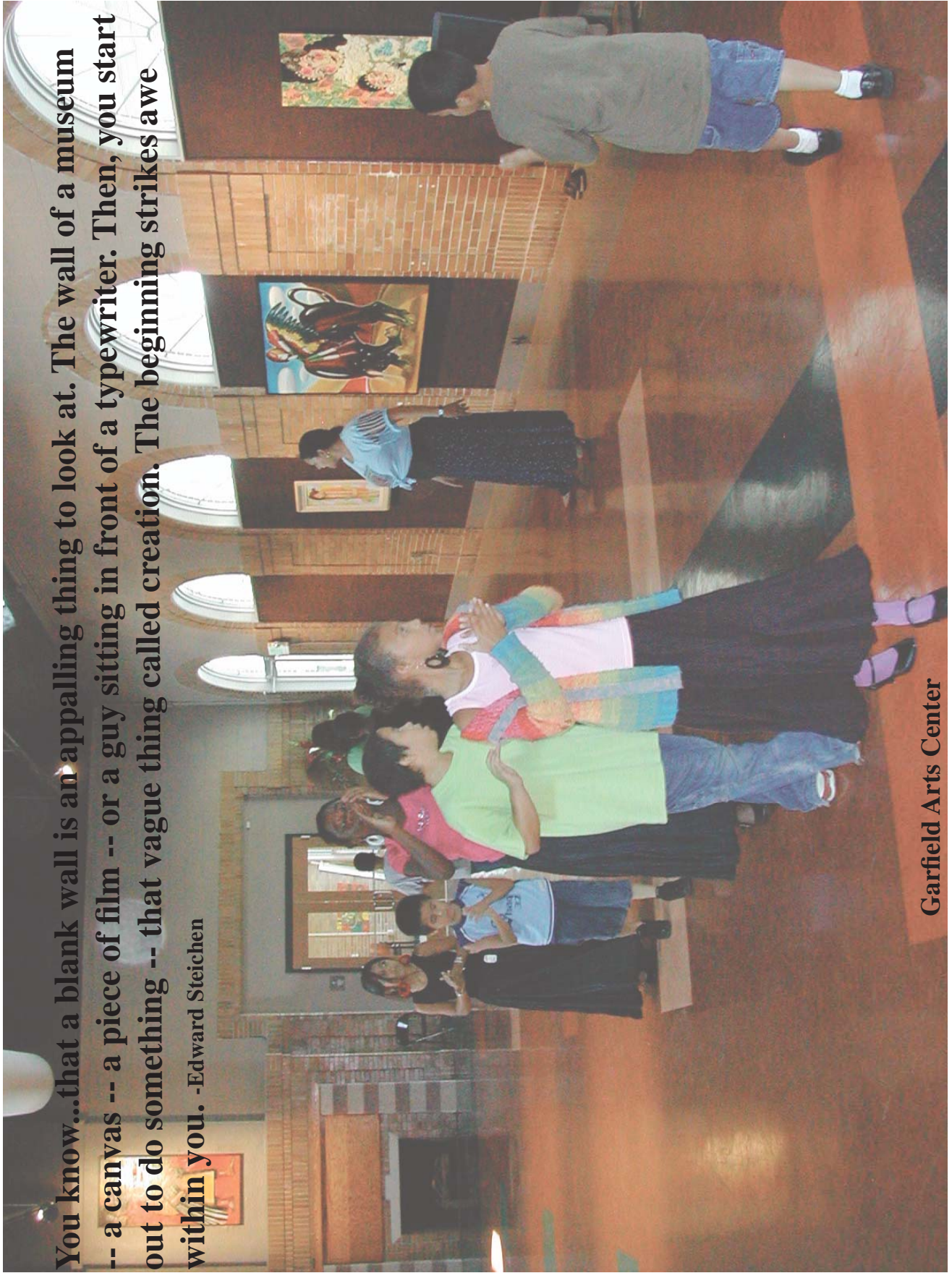


You know...that a blank wall is an appalling thing to look at. The wall of a museum -- a canvas -- a piece of film -- or a guy sitting in front of a typewriter. Then, you start out to do something -- that vague thing called creation. The beginning strikes awe within you. -Edward Steichen



Rehabilitation Inventory

REHABILITATION ISSUES

The Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation has been in existence for over 100 years, and has built a continuous legacy of providing recreation facilities and programs to the City's residents. Over time, many of its facilities have grown old and worn, and are now in need of substantial rehabilitation and repairs. Some facilities, such as playgrounds have been updated within the past 10-12 years, while many swimming pools have not seen major work in 30 years. While maintenance and capital budgets are significant, there are always more projects proposed than can be funded.

Recent Areas of Focus

In 2000, there was a commitment to a focused revitalization effort on Indianapolis' near-east side. Indy Parks' role in this was to begin with a series of Park Master Plans, at Highland, Clayton & LaSalle and Willard Parks. Actions outlined in these plans were soon initiated. At Highland Park, the playground was completely replaced, a picnic shelter was added and a water spray area designed. At Clayton & LaSalle Park, a new playground was constructed adjacent to a new picnic shelter. To rehabilitate Willard Park, an Urban Park and Recreation Recovery grant was obtained, along with a Build Indiana Fund grant, private donations and city funds. This includes renovating the pool and bathhouse, parking lot and park lighting. Basketball courts will be completely replaced and a walking trail will be constructed. Construction is underway as of April 2004. At Christian Park, a grant was obtained to add a gymnasium, locker rooms and classroom space to the historic recreation center, facilitating programs that have grown beyond the facilities' capacity.

Similar projects are underway to update with additions or renovation several other recreation centers: Washington Park, Indy Parks (Garfield) Arts Center,

Municipal Gardens, Rhodius Park and the Eagle Creek Earth Discovery Center. A UPARR grant is in place to fund renovations to the Martin Luther King Park pool and bathhouse renovation.

Despite these ongoing efforts, there remains a list of rehabilitation projects waiting to be funded. Even with the help of private foundations, such as the Indianapolis Parks Foundation, the Friends of Eagle Creek, Garfield and Holliday Parks, and other donors, grants remain a key ingredient for maintaining safe, clean and well-maintained parks.

Areas Needing Rehabilitation

Indy Parks is a county wide agency, with parks ranging from downtown squares to rural agricultural fields. Most of the facilities in need of significant



Riverside Park

Rehabilitation Inventory

investment are within the pre-1969 City boundaries. This area can also be described as the near-north, near-east, near-west and near-south side of the city.

There is a large number of small neighborhood parks in the city, with concentrations on the near west-side and east side. There are a number of larger community parks on the north and east sides. These parks are primarily located in residential areas. Many neighborhoods have become blighted over the years. In these cases an investment in parks could be the catalyst for further private revitalization efforts. Other parks are located on the edges of commercial areas, sited between residential and commercial zones.

Planned Actions

With so many facilities needing renovation, and limited resources to accomplish this, Indy Parks looks to make the most of its dollars by combining efforts with other City agencies and partners. For example, Indy Parks is in the process of renovating Mozel Sanders Park as part of a combined school/park project. Indianapolis Public Schools is constructing a new elementary school in the existing park, making available to Indy Parks its parking lots, offices and gymnasium. In addition, Indy Parks is working to improve the remainder of the park, as well as the site of the old school building. Indy Parks' focus, mentioned earlier,



Perry Park Ice Rink

These parks are often nodes of social activity in the neighborhood, and again revitalizing these facilities can spur improvements by private companies.

Another area of focus for future revitalization effort has been and will continue to be Indianapolis' White River waterfront. From the White River State Park, White River Greenway and Riverside Park, there is more than 1,000 acres of parkland along the White River. In these areas trails, playgrounds, recreation centers, monuments, parking lots and picnic shelters are in need of repairs.

on the near-east side was complemented by work from the Departments of Public Works and Metropolitan Development.

Indy Parks will continue to seek opportunities to partner with other projects, to make the most possible difference with its limited capital dollars. As trails are developed, neighboring park facilities will be brought up to standard as well.

Types of Facilities needing Rehabilitation

Informal staff inventories have been completed at multiple facilities including pools, spray areas, play

Rehabilitation Inventory

courts, ball fields, recreation centers, playgrounds, and their supporting facilities. In many cases this has helped us target the most critical and time sensitive rehabilitation needs. For example, knowledge of the location, condition and capacity of existing recreation centers led directly to a \$10 million grant from the Lilly Endowment to renovate, add to or construct six Recreation Centers.

Throughout the 1990s, more than 100 playgrounds were replaced with equipment that met all safety standards of the day. Today 88 of 126 playgrounds are over 10 years of age and need replacement. In 3 years another 22 playgrounds will join the 10 year mark also. If nothing is done, approximately 90% of the playgrounds in our system will need to be replaced.

In the late 1970s Indy Parks constructed a number of swimming pools and bathhouses. These facilities are now leaking significant quantities of water, sometimes 10"-12" per day. These bathhouses, in most cases, do not meet the access, safety and functionality standards of the Department. Indy Parks has begun this renovation effort with the help of UPARR grants at Willard and Martin Luther King Parks, and will be continuing its efforts at Bethel and Douglass Parks. Other aquatic complexes needing work are Rhodius, Gustafson, Wes Montgomery and Ellenberger Parks.

A fourth facility type in need of major renovations is hard surface play courts and parking lots. In a survey conducted in 2003, 38 of 83 basketball and tennis courts were in need of complete replacement. Only 5 of 83 courts needed no repairs at all. These are just some of the courts in Indy Parks inventory of 215 basketball and tennis courts. Indy Parks also maintains more than 195 parking lots, many of which are failing and in need of resurfacing.

Evaluating Rehabilitation versus Replacement

The decision to replace or rehabilitate a facility must be done on a case by case basis. In the past, the recreation trends in the city of Indianapolis along with excellent economic conditions, and a growing population have supported the construction of many facilities. Indy Parks, with the help of the people of Indianapolis, and a strong sense of historic preservation, has been very sensitive to maintaining, and

were possible, rediscovering historically significant elements. This is evident in the recent adoption of the Indianapolis Park and Boulevard System to the National Register of Historic Places. George E. Kessler parkway plan for the city is still being realized through continued development of pedestrian trails connecting neighborhoods throughout the city.

Within existing budgets, Indy Parks has been able to make maintenance repairs on many facilities, and has extended their lives a great many years. This will



Windsor Village Grand Opening

continue to be the practice where appropriate. However, in many cases, such as the Indy Parks (Garfield) Arts Center or Willard Park bathhouse, the time comes when complete renovation is necessary. These projects are well suited for public and private grant opportunities. In other cases, such as the Eagle Creek Park Earth Discovery Center, it is cost effective in both the short and long term to demolish the existing facility and start from scratch. Once again these decisions are made on a case by case basis. Often these decisions are informed by hiring a design consultant to prepare a scope report including recommendations regarding rehabilitation and replacement issues.